

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4.10 RECREATION.....	4.10-1
4.10.1 INTRODUCTION	4.10-1
4.10.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING	4.10-1
4.10.3 METHODOLOGY.....	4.10-11
4.10.4 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE	4.10-11
4.10.5 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES	4.10-12
4.10.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS	4.10-13
4.10.7 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION.....	4.10-13

FIGURES

Figure 4.10.1: City of Long Beach Parks	4.10-3
Figure 4.10.2: City of Long Beach Specialty Recreation Facilities	4.10-5
Figure 4.10.3: City of Long Beach Water Recreation Facilities and Golf Courses	4.10-7
Figure 4.10.4: Signal Hill Public Recreation Facilities	4.10-9

4.10 RECREATION

4.10.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides the recreational setting of the project site, including surrounding recreation facilities and an analysis of potential impacts that project implementation may have on existing recreation facilities. Information presented in this section is based on the Open Space and Recreation Element of the City of Long Beach General Plan, the City of Signal Hill General Plan, and the Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine Departmental Strategic Plan. With the exception of the Signal Hill General Plan, these documents are available for review at the City of Long Beach Department of Planning and Building. The City of Signal Hill General Plan is available for review at the City of Signal Hill Department of Community Development.

4.10.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

On-Site Recreation Opportunities

The project site is located in the north-central portion of the City of Long Beach. Surrounded on three sides by the City of Signal Hill, the site has views of downtown Long Beach and other areas. Currently no city or county recreational facilities are located on the project site.

Although the majority of the property is owned by the City of Long Beach, the project site is fenced and access is restricted. Despite posted warning signs, portions of the site are experiencing unauthorized public use from homeless persons and others interested in view opportunities that occur on the project site. Existing on-site paths are not intended for public use, and authorization to enter is subject to consent of the property owners.

Off-Site Recreation Opportunities

The City of Long Beach Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department operates and maintains all municipal parks and recreation facilities in the City of Long Beach. The parks and recreation system includes 94¹ parks encompassing 1,672 acres (Strategic Plan, Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine, 2003). In addition to parks, the City has a number of specialty facilities that provide recreation and leisure opportunities. These include a riverfront recreation vehicle compound, two historic ranchos, the Long Beach Museum of Art, two marine biological reserves, two special events parks (Queen Mary and Rainbow Lagoon), the park at Colorado Lagoon, Shoreline, Santa Cruz and Victory parks, and the El Dorado Nature Center Park and trail. The City is also home to a number of water recreation areas including boat launches, Alamitos Bay, and Marine Stadium, and both public and private golf courses. Public golf courses include Heartwell, El Dorado, Recreation, Recreation South, and Skylinks. Four of these courses are 18 hole and one is a 9-hole executive

¹ Total by park type classification wherein portions of El Dorado, Heartwell, and DeForest parks fall into multiple park type classes. When parks are simply counted by name, there are 89 parks in the City.

course. Each is maintained and operated by a private contractor. Figures 4.10.1 through 4.10.3 show the location of the City's parks, specialty recreation facilities, water recreation facilities, and golf courses.

In addition to designated recreation facilities, the City of Long Beach maintains certain open space areas including a cemetery adjacent to the proposed project site. Although only the Municipal Cemetery is maintained by the City, both cemeteries have been designated permanent open space uses.

The City of Long Beach has few open recreation areas within its boundaries that are owned and maintained by other governmental jurisdictions. The most significant of these are the Los Angeles County bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails along the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers and Coyote Creek. The County also leases a 4.82-acre park in the Carmelitos Housing Development, and the City of Los Alamitos has a one-half acre park within the boundaries of Long Beach (Strategic Plan, Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine, 2003).

Based on information from the Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine, there is significant use of City of Long Beach facilities by nonresidents. Heartwell Park, located near the project site, is estimated to have equal use by residents and nonresidents (including those from nearby and adjacent cities), while El Dorado Regional Park is estimated to have a majority of nonresident use. Neighborhood parks are estimated to have nearly total resident use. In addition, City of Long Beach sports leagues have a majority resident requirement, but also serve employees of Long Beach businesses, who may not all be residents.

The City of Signal Hill, which surrounds the project site on three sides, maintains the closest existing recreation uses to the project site. The largest of the City's parks is Signal Hill Park (previously Hinshaw Park), located at Cherry Avenue and 21st Street. The 10.07-acre park provides the only active recreational facilities provided by the City of Signal Hill. Figure 4.10.4, Signal Hill Public Recreation Facilities, shows the location of public recreation facilities in the City of Signal Hill that are located in the vicinity of the proposed project site.

Recreation Planning

In October 2002, the City adopted a new Open Space and Recreation Element for its General Plan. The updated Element examined the current supply of open space, recreation facilities, and land resources, and determined that the per-capita ratio of recreation open space in Long Beach has declined substantially over the past 28 years as population growth has outpaced development of recreation facilities. In 1973, it was estimated that the City had 2,500 acres of recreation open space, and a ratio of 7.0 acres per 1,000 residents. In 2001, the updated Open Space and Recreation Element estimates that 2,600 acres of recreation open space exist in the City at a ratio of 5.6 acres per 1,000 residents. Developed public parks comprise approximately 1,425 acres, or 55 percent, of that total. Beaches, golf courses, and water recreation areas comprise the remainder.

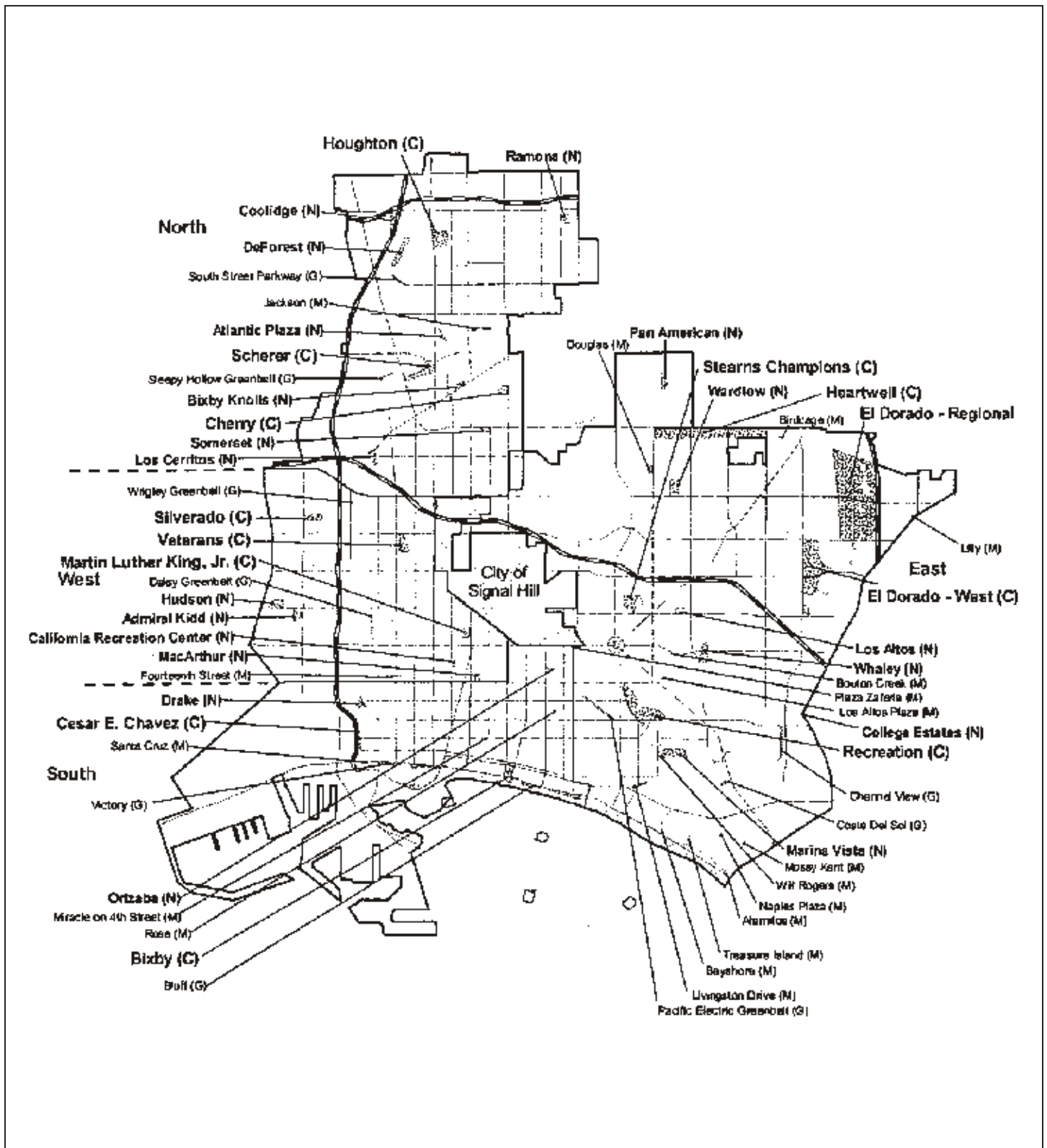


FIGURE 4.10.1

LSA



NO SCALE

SOURCE: Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine 2001 Maps of Parks, Facilities, and Service Areas.
C - Community Park, N - Neighborhood Park, M - Mini Park, G Greenway.

Long Beach Sports Park
City Parks and Beaches

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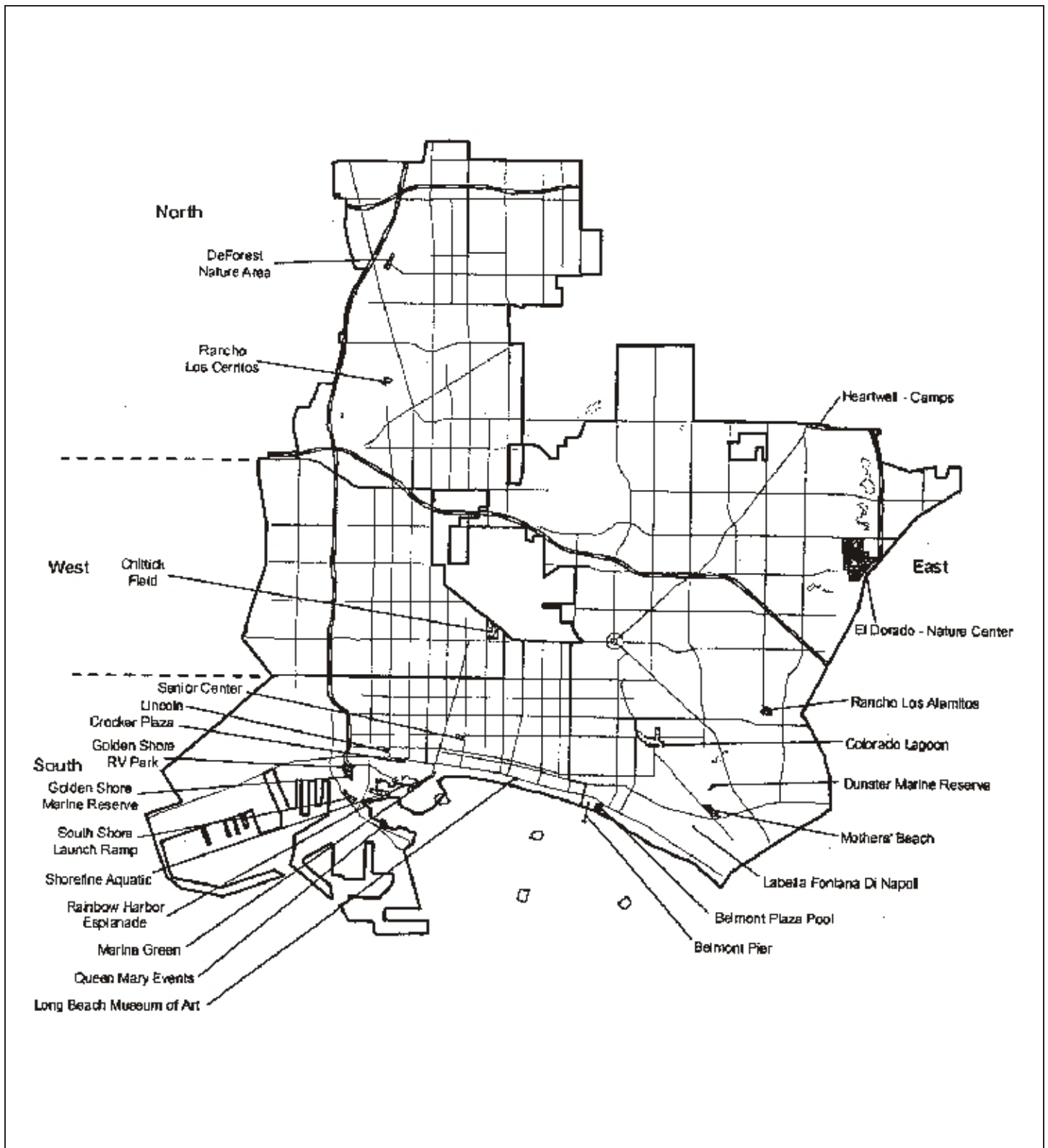


FIGURE 4.10.2

LSA



NO SCALE

SOURCE: Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine 2001 Maps of Parks, Facilities, and Service Areas.

*Long Beach Sports Park
Specialty Features*

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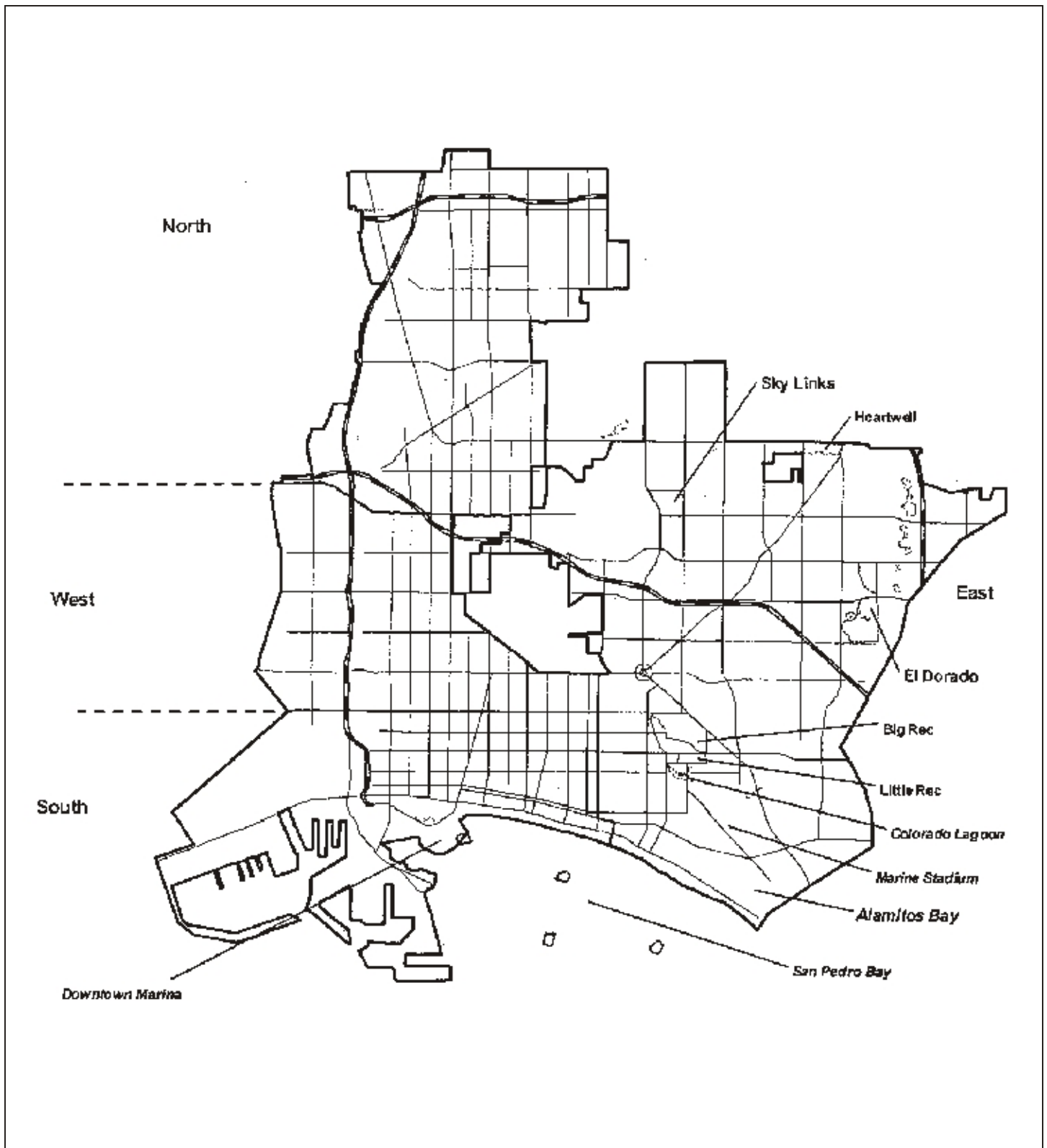


FIGURE 4.10.3

LSA

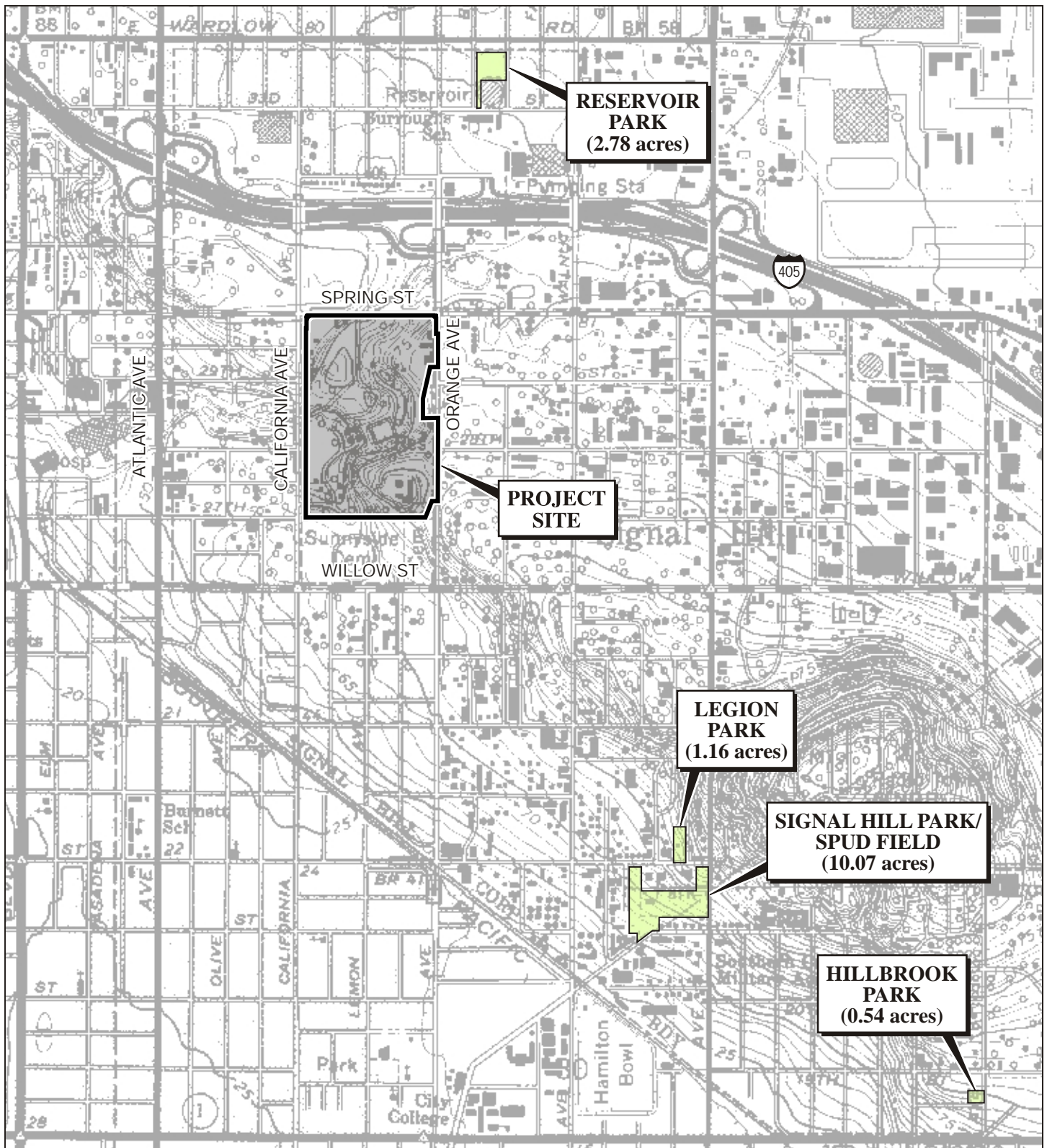


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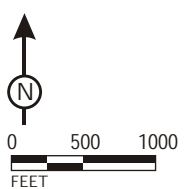
SOURCE: Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine 2001 Maps of Parks, Facilities, and Service Areas.

*Long Beach Sports Park
Golf Courses and
Water Recreation Areas*

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LSA



SOURCE: City of Signal Hill, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1989.

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FIGURE 4.10.4

Long Beach Sports Park
City of Signal Hill
Public Recreation Facilities

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In examining the appropriate standard for the ratio of recreation open space per capita, the updated Open Space and Recreation Element concluded that the City should adopt a ratio of 8 acres per 1,000 residents in order to account for the large proportion of water recreation resources in the City and to support the City's economic development objectives. Using this standard, the updated Open Space and Recreation Element estimates that the City should have 3,700 acres of recreation open space.

Similarly, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine Departmental Strategic Plan (2003) concluded that the City Long Beach had an estimated 5.8 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. This is substantially below the average of 13 acres per 1,000 residents for all the cities compared, and somewhat below the average of 7 acres per 1,000 residents for other high-density cities. Many of these other cities have national, State, or county parks within their boundaries that serve the needs of their residents. Long Beach has no such parks.

For comparison purposes, the Strategic Plan presented information on population density in the City of Long Beach and the location of parks and recreation facilities. The City is divided into four Park Districts (North, South, East, and West) and the population of the West, South and North areas is dense, while the East area is less dense. Generally speaking, the higher the population density, the greater the need for park space. However, in the City of Long Beach, much of the parkland is concentrated on the eastern edge of the City, while the majority of the City's residents are in the West, South, and North Park districts.

The Strategic Plan also identified an existing shortfall in the number of sports fields in the City. For example, currently there is one soccer/football field for every 10,989 residents, below the target service level of one soccer or football field for every 5,000 residents.¹ Long Beach currently has a total of 65 publicly accessible sports fields that can be used for baseball or softball, or one baseball/softball field for every 7,100 residents.² This level is also below the target service level of one baseball/softball field for every 5,000 residents.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Element of the Signal Hill General Plan (1989) also recognizes a parks and open space deficit and supports the provision of additional park facilities, including the provision of soccer, baseball, and softball fields, among other sports courts.

4.10.3 METHODOLOGY

The analysis in this section addresses issues relating to recreational facilities and the provision of recreation programs and services that may be affected by the proposed project. This assessment is based on the City of Long Beach's planning standards for recreation facilities.

4.10.4 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The proposed project could have a significant impact on the environment if the project would:

¹ Long Beach, Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine Strategic Plan (2003) p. 35.

² Ibid

- increase demand on the City of Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine's services and facilities beyond their capacity, thereby accelerating or leading to substantial physical deterioration of existing recreation facilities; or
- include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

4.10.5 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Park Acreage Need to Population

As previously stated, the City of Long Beach has identified an existing shortfall in the amount of recreation open space and number of sports fields in the City. The proposed project will increase the number of available recreation fields and provide recreation facilities that would not otherwise be available to the public. The project will provide playing and spectator facilities for league soccer and softball, as well as youth-oriented facilities such as a skateboard park and a youth golf training facility.

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine Strategic Plan concludes that there is a current need for 27 additional baseball/softball fields in the City, and that the need will grow to 32 fields by 2010. The Departmental Strategic Plan also identifies a current need for an additional 50 soccer /football fields, and projects that the need will grow to 55 fields by 2010. The proposed project will result in an increase of six softball/baseball fields and four soccer fields in the City, thereby increasing both the acreage dedicated to recreation uses and the number of sports fields available to serve the existing population.

While the proposed project will increase the number of acres dedicated to recreation in the West Park District, as a pay-for-play facility, the project will serve league sports players throughout the City, not just in the immediate area. The Sports Park and Youth Golf facility will be open to all members of the public subject to a fee for use structure. The adopted (2002) Open Space and Recreation Element defines commercial recreation as "a recreational activity and/or facility for which a fee is charged by a private, for-profit person, partnership or corporation where that entity has the discretion to set the fee independent of the City's Recreation Commission or City Council." An operating contractor for the Sports Park facilities, including softball, soccer, skate park, and batting cage uses, has not yet been selected, and user fees have yet to be established. It is anticipated that the fees for the sports fields, primarily intended for league use, will be competitive with comparable public and private facilities in the greater Long Beach area. It is currently anticipated that the youth sports facilities will be operated by not-for-profit or nonprofit enterprises and that fees will be established that maintain accessibility by the majority of the City's population.

The proposed project will not increase demand on the City of Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine's services and facilities beyond their capacity, nor would the project result in an increase in population, which is the determining factor in supplying adequate parks and open space areas to residents. In addition, the proposed project will not preclude the use of any existing recreation facilities in the project vicinity, but will provide new recreational facilities. Therefore, there are no adverse impacts related to impacts to other parks and recreation facilities.

The proposed project will provide additional recreation facilities for members of the public. The proposed project will reduce demand on existing facilities by increasing the available supply of ball fields and recreation facilities. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts associated with existing recreation facilities would occur as a result of project implementation

Construction of Recreation Facilities

The proposed project includes the construction and operation of a variety of recreation facilities including ball fields, playgrounds, a skate park, and a youth golf facility. Operation of the proposed project, including the recreation facilities, is expected to result in significant impacts as outlined in this EIR. The proposed project may have significant unavoidable impacts involving other environmental topics (see Chapter 4: Section 4.5, Biological Resources, Section 4.6, Cultural Resources, Section 4.7, Public Services and Utilities, Section 4.8, Air Quality, and Section 4.9, Traffic and Circulation).

4.10.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impact analysis considers the impacts of all park and recreation factors in the vicinity of the project. Implementation of the proposed project will result in the creation of approximately 53 acres of public recreation space. The project significantly improves public access to the site and will result in a net increase in the amount of land dedicated to parks and open space in the City and the region. The expansion of recreational opportunities may have a secondary benefit of freeing up other ball fields and soccer fields in the area allowing more frequent use by local neighborhoods. Therefore, no cumulative impacts related to recreation would result from the proposed project when it is combined with other foreseeable projects that are planned or expected to occur in the City or the region.

4.10.7 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

There will be no significant adverse impacts to recreation conditions associated with the proposed project. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

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